THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS

AT

THE MONK'S REST

AND

THE BUGLE HOTEL

TITCHFIELD

The Bugle Hotel

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WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN A.D. 70?

Taken from: *What Happend in AD 70*, **by Ed Stevens**

Prepared and narrated by David Clarke for the group meeting at The Monke's Rest and the Bugle Hotel in Titchfield.

All quotes are taken from the King James Bible (KJV)

The Siege of Jerusalem – A.D. 70

Ground plan of the City of Jerusalem

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1. What Really Happened in A.D. 70?

Many of us need to refresh our understanding of first-century history. Some very significant events took place during that period—events which we have seldom heard of, and whose full importance we have rarely grasped.

In A.D. 66, the Jews revolted against Rome. This uprising was brought about by many causes, some arising from Roman oppression, and others from the conduct and unrest of the Jews themselves.

The Siege and Fall of Jerusalem

The Siege of Jerusalem 66 - 70 A.D.

By the summer of A.D. 70, the Romans had subdued the revolt and captured the city of Jerusalem. The city was burned, and the temple was utterly destroyed—desecrated and laid waste. These events had been foretold by the Lord Jesus some forty years earlier, and every word of His prophecy came to pass. The Jewish nation and its sacrificial system were so completely dismantled that the temple worship has never since been restored in any permanent way.

Many Jewish teachers have referred to A.D. 70 as "the end of Biblical Judaism." This event was also of great importance for Christians. Before this time, Christians were often regarded as merely another sect within Judaism. Other Jewish groups—such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes—had strongly opposed and persecuted them in an attempt to suppress the faith.

But A.D. 70 changed all this. After the destruction of Jerusalem,

Christians were no longer viewed as a Jewish sect. While the other Jewish groups had taken part in the revolt against Rome, the Jewish Christians did not. Remembering the warnings of Christ, they fled across the Jordan to Pella. By refusing to participate in the revolt, they clearly distinguished themselves from the rest of the nation.

Thus it became evident that Christians were not establishing an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual one. This is a truth that ought to be remembered, especially in light of modern appeals for a political restoration. With the destruction of the temple, the ceremonial law could no longer be observed, and disputes over circumcision and law-keeping quickly faded. The Jewish nation was so completely broken that it would never again pose a serious threat to the followers of Christ.

The destruction of Jerusalem also demonstrated that the Kingdom had been taken from the Jewish nation and given to a people who would bring forth its fruits (see Gospel of Matthew 21:43).

"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

It provided a final testimony to that generation concerning the identity of Jesus Christ. It showed plainly that God was not concerned with establishing a physical empire for the Jews, but with the spiritual reign of His Son over all nations. The Lord had told those who condemned Him that they would themselves witness that which would vindicate His claims (see Gospel of Matthew 26:64).

"Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

That vindication came in A.D. 70, when the Jewish nation was destroyed. This judgment was severe, and served as a solemn warning, not only to the Jews of that generation, but also to the wider Roman world. It confirmed that Christ's followers were indeed the true Israel of God.

The importance of these events is far greater than many have realised. Our Lord not only foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, but also spoke of His "coming" and "the end of the age" (see Gospel of Matthew 24:3,34).

"What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"
"This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

These events were to take place within that first-century generation. The testimony of the New Testament consistently affirms the nearness of His coming.

James declares that the coming of the Lord was at hand (see Epistle of James 5:8–9):

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door."

Peter likewise writes that the end of all things was at hand (see First Epistle of Peter 4:7):

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

Paul speaks of the day being at hand, and urges believers to awaken (see Epistle to the Romans 13:11–12):

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

The writer to the Hebrews affirms that Christ's coming would be in a very little while (see Epistle to the Hebrews 10:37):

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

John testifies that it was already the last hour (see First Epistle of John 2:18):

"Little children, it is the last time…"

Finally, the book of Book of Revelation repeatedly affirms that the events described therein were soon to take place, and that the time was near (see Rev. 1:1–3; 22:6–7,10,12,20):

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass…"

"…for the time is at hand."

"Behold, I come quickly…"

What is commonly referred to as the "Second Coming" was thus fulfilled in that generation, in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem (see Epistle to the Hebrews 9:26–28).

"…but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

"…unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

This passage shows that our Lord would appear again, not to deal with sin, but to bring salvation to those who were waiting for Him, and judgment upon those who had rejected Him (cf. Hebrews 10:25–37). These repeated statements concerning the nearness of His coming cannot be dismissed without calling into question the integrity of the New Testament.

The book of Book of Revelation describes, in symbolic language,

the judgments that came upon the Jews during their war with Rome (A.D. 66–70). What is often referred to as Armageddon may be understood in this context as God's use of the Roman armies to bring an end to the persecution of His people.

There is also good reason to believe that Revelation, along with the other books of the New Testament, was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The extraordinary gifts of the early church—such as tongues and inspired revelation—appear to have ceased around that time, once the full revelation of the Kingdom had been completed (see First Epistle to the Corinthians 13:8–10).

"Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease…"

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

Thus, the early, partial state of the church gave way to a more complete and established condition, once all that was necessary for the understanding of the Kingdom had been fully revealed.

The Kingdom had now been fully established under the rule of Christ, and His enemies—those who had rejected Him and persecuted His followers—had been judged. In this way, the words of Scripture were fulfilled (see Gospel of Luke 21:22,31).

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

"When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

A. The Second Coming Was Near in the First Century

The testimony of Scripture consistently affirms that the coming of Christ was near in the first century. Our Lord declared that the work among Israel would not be completed before His return (see Gospel

of Matthew 10:23).

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

He further declared that some standing with Him would not taste death until they saw the Son of man coming in His kingdom (Matt. 16:27–28).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

He also stated that all these things would take place before that generation had passed away (Matt. 24:33–34).

"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

And He told the Jewish rulers themselves that they would witness His vindication (Matt. 26:64).

"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

The apostles spoke in the same manner. Paul wrote that it was already the hour to awake, for the day was at hand (see Epistle to the Romans 13:11–12).

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

He also assured believers that God would soon crush Satan under their feet (Rom. 16:20).

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

He taught that the time was shortened and that the present world was passing away (1 Cor. 7:29–31), and that the ends of the ages had come upon them (1 Cor. 10:11).

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short…"
"…for the fashion of this world passeth away."

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

He also observed that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work (2 Thess. 2:7).

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work…"

The writer to the Hebrews declared that it was already the last days (Heb. 1:2).

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son…"

He further taught that the consummation of the ages had arrived (Heb. 9:26), that the day was drawing near (Heb. 10:25), and that Christ would come in "a very little while" (Heb. 10:37).

"…but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

"…and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."
"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

James likewise affirmed that the coming of the Lord was at hand, and that the Judge stood before the door (James 5:8–9).

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

"…behold, the judge standeth before the door."

Peter wrote that these were the last times (1 Pet. 1:20), that the end of all things was at hand (1 Pet. 4:7), and that the time had come for judgment to begin (1 Pet. 4:17).

"…but was manifest in these last times for you."

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God…"

John declared that it was the last hour, and that the world was passing away (1 John 2:17–18).

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof…"

"…Little children, it is the last time…"

Jude warned that mockers of the last time had already appeared (Jude 18–19).

"…there should be mockers in the last time…"

Finally, the book of Book of Revelation repeatedly affirms that the events described therein must shortly come to pass, and that the

time was near (Rev. 1:1–3; 22:6,10).

"…things which must shortly come to pass…"

"…for the time is at hand."

The Lord Himself confirms this, saying (Rev. 22:7,12,20):

"Behold, I come quickly…"

B. Parables Concerning the End of the Age and the Coming

The teaching of our Lord in parables likewise points to this same period of judgment and fulfilment. In the parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24–43), He declares:

"The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

In the parable of the dragnet (Matt. 13:47–50), He again speaks of a final separation:

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."

The parable of the vineyard (Matt. 21:33ff) sets forth the rejection of the Son and the judgment that follows:

"He will miserably destroy those wicked men…"

The parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:1ff) likewise shows both invitation and judgment:

"…but when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

The parable of the nobleman (Luke 19:11–17) speaks of a return in

which accounts are settled:

"…after having received the kingdom, he commanded these servants to be called unto him…"
In Matthew 25, the parables of the ten virgins and the talents emphasise readiness:

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour…"

And the parable of the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6–9) warns of imminent judgment:

"…cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

C. Other Statements Concerning the Destruction and the Coming

Beyond these, there are numerous direct statements concerning the coming judgment. John the Baptist warned of the wrath to come (Matt. 3:7–12).

"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
"…he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Our Lord also warned His disciples of persecution and division (Matt. 10:17–34):

"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils…"

In His great discourse, He spoke plainly of the judgment to fall upon that generation (Matt. 23:36; 24:2):

"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."
"There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

He lamented over Jerusalem and foretold its desolation (Luke 19:41–44):

"…thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee… and shall lay thee even with the ground…"

And He warned of the suffering that would accompany those days (Luke 23:28–30):

"…weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children."

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The writer to the Hebrews declared that it was already the last days (Heb. 1:2), that the consummation of the ages had arrived (Heb. 9:26), that the day was drawing near (Heb. 10:25), and that Christ would come in "a very little while" (Heb. 10:37). James likewise affirmed that the coming of the Lord was at hand, and that the Judge stood before the door (Jas. 5:7–9; cf. Phil. 4:5).

Peter wrote that these were the last times (1 Pet. 1:20), that the end of all things was at hand (1 Pet. 4:7), and that the time had come for judgment to begin (1 Pet. 4:17; cf. Rev. 3:10). John declared that it was the last hour, and that the world was passing away (1 John 2:8,17,18), while Jude warned that the mockers of the last time had already appeared (Jude 18–19).

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